

Rep. Vruwink: Governor calls on legislature to pass Vruwink's Small Farm Diversity legislation

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MADISON - In his State of the State speech Wednesday (January 22), Gov. Tony Evers called on the Legislature to pass a bill drafted by Rep. Don Vruwink that will help farmers diversify their operations and grow Wisconsin's economy.

Evers called for a bill that creates a small farm diversity grant. It will help new producers fund start-up costs and assist existing producers in entering new markets.

"Gov. Evers spoke about many of the issues I have been working on - student loan debt, non-partisan redistricting, investing in our schools," Vruwink said. "But he spent a lot of time on agriculture, one of the backbones of the Wisconsin economy. I'm pleased the Governor has embraced my bill that will help new farmers and long-time farmers put their dreams into action. We have no shortage of innovation and work ethic in Wisconsin."

Assembly Bill 495, if enacted, would provide up to \$50,000 per grant for agricultural operations that are conducted on 50 acres or less of land. Both start-ups and existing operations qualify. "Agricultural product" is defined as fruit, vegetables, grain, livestock, fish or minnows, and industrial hemp. Grant recipients must provide equal matching funds and comply with reporting requirements.